Community Members Speak out Against the "Alleged Pretendians List"

May 27, 2021

The following statement was submitted to LRI by the signees below denouncing the "Alleged Pretendians List". Opinions expressed in the letter are of the signees alone.

IN DEFENSE OF NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION: A CALL TO ACTION AGAINST COLONIAL AND LATERAL VIOLENCE, AND ATTACKS ON INDIGENEITY

We recognize that American Indian, Indigenous, and Native American identities in the United States are a complex and often difficult subject especially in the context of a violent colonial history that performed some of the worst human atrocities in the history of human civilization. The dispossession of Native land and attempts at cultural genocide have often led to issues of historical and familial trauma. We recognize these traumas and we also reject the premise that we are a damaged people. We recognize and acknowledge the many ways that American Indian, Indigenous, and Native American Peoples are thriving and living in joy as the stewards of their diverse nations, communities, and environments. We respect and honor the right of every nation to determine their own membership or citizenship requirements including traditional cultural, kinship, and clan systems that are used to determine membership based on our own values and not those of a foreign government such as the United States. We respect that there is no single, set criteria which defines Indigeneity. Additionally, we respect and honor the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which also honors both individual and collective rights of a Peoples to self-determine their livelihoods, identities and futures.

While federal and state recognition are ways that we legally acknowledge and understand Native American and Indigenous Peoples in the United States, a colonial state, we also honor the fact that federal and state status is not the only form of "recognition" and "assertion of rights" for tribes, Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples across North America. We also recognize the problems with disenrollment, xenophobia, anti-Indigenous, anti-Indian, and anti-Black racism that can lead to insidious forms of individual and collective exclusion. Many tribes have been terminated or thought non-existent for example because they do not meet the requirements of another non-Native government (the United States). We reject the premise that federal recognition is the only way to determine American Indian, Indigenous, and Native American identity. It is within this context that we call on all community members to reject attempts by outsiders to determine tribally specific status of individuals and groups. We believe that every tribe's self-determination and/or sovereign status should allow them to define who is and is not a member of their communities, including adoption as that is a tribe exercising their sovereignty to determine their own citizenship.

It has come to our attention that Jacqueline Keeler, who claims to be a Dakota/Diné journalist currently residing in Portland, Oregon is compiling a list of what she describes as "alleged pretend Indians", or "pretendians". This is not the first example of J. Keeler's use of lateral

violence, colonial trauma, and colonial recognition as weaponized structures and frameworks against those that she might disagree with, contest her, or who she may have a personal problem with through her network. We do recognize the serious concern about fraud, misconception and violence that has long been a problem in Indian Country. However, we believe there are better ways to address this issue without defamation or attacks on peoples' character, careers, and families. J. Keeler's list lacks documentation, is libelous, and includes dozens of people who are recognized by their tribes and communities as kin and contributing members of their communities. While some may not be enrolled or citizens they are accepted in their communities and we recognize that these decisions should ultimately be made by the tribes/communities in question and not by any self-appointed arbiter of Indian identity who isn't a member of all of the tribes in question. We find her behavior and actions not only counter-productive, damaging and violent, but also to be self-serving and self-promoting in light of her upcoming book about mascots and "pretendians" that she has publicly discussed. Additionally, her behaviors and actions are used to promote her own assertion of a citizenship model that relies on a colonial framework and denial of the self-determination of tribes, including those not formally recognized by the United States government, within the U.S. as well as Canada and Mexico. Moreover, by Keeler's own admission several people on the list have identifiable Native/tribally specific ancestors, yet she keeps them on the list anyway she states for "recording purposes". Keeler's biased methodology lacks consistency, legitimacy and is created by one individual for her own purposes not to serve the best interests of Indian Country.

J. Keeler has used this topic to promote her podcast Pollen Nation, her forthcoming book (which we will not advertise), and to buttress her journalism career. These attacks come at a time when our communities are being ravaged by a global pandemic, on-going environmental racism, the struggle for food sovereignty, anti-blackness against Black Native relatives, xenophobia, and a slew of other issues that require the attention and good work of many. Much of this important work is being done by individuals named in Keeler's document. Rather than focusing on and uplifting the good work on the issues impacting our community like COVID relief, MMIWG2S, food sovereignty, releasing Indigenous children in cages, culture and language revitalization, environmental stewardship, she is using a deeply divisive, extractive and violent tool of the colonizer to slander and sow discord.

We call on J. Keeler to cease and desist with this list and with the intrusion into the status of Native and Indigenous people outside of her own nations. We call on her to respect the rights of every tribe, and urban inter-tribal communities to determine their own people, kin and citizenship. We also demand that she stop with her plans to publish a book with the names of individuals who are not connected to her own tribal nation(s). We the undersigned demand that she issue an apology to all of people on this list whose privacy she has invaded and to those who never claimed to be enrolled tribal members or citizens but who acknowledge their ancestral descent and kinship connection to their nations, as well as to those who have never claimed to be Indian at all. We demand that these people who are indeed accepted by their own tribes and communities as members from a traditional cultural practice be given a public apology and the respect that they deserve for the everyday work that they do including the emotional labor they must expend as a result of these acts of violence, threat, and malice. If she does not cease and desist, we support those individuals and tribal nations that may seek legal action against her to stop this campaign of slander that she is leading against respected members of Native American communities.

Signed,

Fochik (Chikashsha)

Nitakechi Hʋshitomi Mʋckintoubbee (Choctaw Nation) G. Baker

(Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muscogee Creek, Chowanoke) Tiana

Best (Mvskoke DESCENDANT)

Anne Buse (Cherokee)

Sungmanitu Tanka Wakhúwa (Oglala Lakota)

Darelle D. Butler (The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians)

Kylie Gemmel (Suquamish)

Nicholas Galanin - Yéil Ya-Tseen (Tlingit, Unangaŷ)

Jacquelynn Bowman (Diné)

Mona Sespe

William Miller (Blackfeet, Cherokee)

Taelor B (Cherokee Nation)

Fox Spears (Karuk)

Jennifer Fuentes

Luke BlackElk (Lakota)

Tetana Adkins Mace (Coville Confederation of Tribes)

Dana Arviso (Diné (Navajo))

Caleb Dunlap (Minnesota Ojibwe (Fond du Lac))

Roxanne White (Nez Perce, Yakama. Nooksack and Gros Ventre)

Charmaine Tulee (Northern Arapaho)

Rae R.

Cissy Strong Reyes (Member of Umatilla... linage with Yakama Nation)

Raven Two Feathers (Cherokee, Seneca, Cayuga, Comanche)

Lorie Thomas (Nisqually & Cowlitz)

Daisee Francour (Oneida Nation)

Andrew Jolivette, Ph.D. (Ishak)

Denbigh Sockpealuk Perry (Native Village of Shaktoolik)

Linda McWilliams (Nottoway/Chowanoke)

Cecilia Mellieon (Tohono O'odham Nation)

Helen Pettiford (Mexica)

Aurora Mamea (Blackfeet)

Christine Duckworth (Lumbee)

Monique Sol Sonoquie (Tongva/Chumash)

Brody Lee (Cherokee)

Sage Trudell (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

Suzanne Keeptwo (Metis of Quebec, Canada)

Linda Heaton (Meherrin Nation)

Weezie Wood (Mvskoke Creek)

Yahtiley Phoenix (Indigenous Strong)

Dr. Raul S. Chavez (Mt. San Antonio College Indigenous Studies)

Colleen Farwell (Crow)

Ben-Alex Dupris aka @Bendigenous (Entiat-Wenatchi band of the Colville Confederated Tribes & Mnicoujou Lakota)

Sonny Assu (Kwakwaka'wakw)

Jennifer Night Bird Miller (Gros Ventre Metis / Michif, adopted Mattaponi) Raymond Buffalo Bear MaGee (Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians/Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation)

William Hawk Birdshead (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)

Faithlyn Seawright (Chickasaw Nation)

Diane M. Zephier J.D. (Oglala Lakota)

Brianna Sylvers (Wailacki)

Cathay L Cory (Chukchansi)

Lisa Wilson (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma)

Hoku Rivera (Kanaka Maoli)

Elten Friday

Isa Ortiz (Tohono O'odham)

Robin Ruiz (Zacatecas)

M.C. Gonzales (Coastal Band Chumash)

Johana Castillo (Mamatortuga.org)

Marcy Middleton (Navajo Nation)

Jalynne Geddes (Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation) Kari Baker (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

Wovoka Trudell (Santee Dakota)

Joel Garcia (Wixaritari (Huichol))

Kimberly Robertson, PhD (Mvskoke)

Jennifer R. Bell (Tlingit)

Rebecca LaPlante (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

Joseph Vasquez (Apache)

Quinn Balsz (Tongva)

Sarai Garnett (Cherokee)

Valerie Goodness (Tsalagi and Chippawa heritage)

Tana Atchley Culbertson (Klamath Tribes)

Nube Crux (Hiaki Yoemem)

James Pakootas (Colville Confederated Tribes)

Thanyne Hutchins (Mohegan Tribe)

Shannon Parsons (Mi'kmaq)

Luhui Whitebear, Ph.D. (Coastal Band Chumash/Téenek) Dr. Melissa Bird (Southern Paiute)

Nellie Jo David (Tohono O'odham/Hia Ced O'odham)

Ahchishi Okshulba Cloud (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma) Brandy Nalani McDougall (Kanaka ʻŌiwi)

Grace Sinclair (Gila River Maricopa)

Sylvia Stephenson Ross (Disenrolled Chukchansi California Yokuts) Willa Keeler (Yankton Sioux)

Marni King (Oneida Nation/Menominee Nation)

Deana Dartt, PhD (Coastal Band Chumash/Mestiza)

O'NESHA COCHRAN-DUMAS (Oglala Sioux Tribe the Lakota NATION)

Sydney Freeland (Navajo)

Paulette Luhui Isha Ward (Chumash/Wishtoyo Foundation)

Simona Bearcub (Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes)

Ionah Scully (Michel First Nations)

Dr. Karen Capuder (Akwesasne Mohawk (non-enrolled)) Joseph Durbin (Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel)

N. Trudell (CRST)

Moises Gonzales (Genizaro of New Mexico)

Layla Amis

Adam Owl (Eastern Band of Cherokee)

Johanne Brissette (Chicot Métis)

Debbi Huntoon (Genizaro)

Patricia Ortega Simó (Genizaro)

Alicia Cordero (Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation / Wishtoyo Foundation)

Jolene Rios (Genizaro Nation)

Felicia Espinoza (Choctaw Nation)

Adnan

Alicia Semotan

Rafael J. González (Xochipilli, Chicano/Latino men's circle)

Michael E. Bauer (Métis)

Charlene L. Sleeper (Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho of Oklahoma, MMIP Billings, MT)

Juan Luis Longoria Granados (Ndé)

Crystel Alma Cabeza De Baca - Gallo (Jicarilla Apache/Genizara Pueblo)

Gabriel Thunder Cloud Trujillo (Chihende Nde'Chiricahuas Apache of New Mexico)

Virginia McLaurin

Istara Freedom (Pueblo Genízara)

James M. Aranda (Genízaro/Chicano)

Raymond Tsumpti Jr. (Warm Springs/Wasco)

Isa Saldivar (Yoeme, Rarámuri, Mexica)

LJ Johnson (Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation)

Jolie Varela (Indigenous Women Hike)

David Perez (Genizaro)

Sheryl Reid Lambert (Genizara)

Mia Lopez (Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation / Wishtoyo)

Raoul Dittmer (Ho chunk Nation)

Charles Hudson (MHA Nation)

ItzhotliCihuatl (Mestizo/Genizaro)

Donna Martinez (Proudly Chicana and Genizara)

Paulette Jordan (Coeur d'Alene Tribe)

Che Butler (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians)

Kwawhtlatas Itztli Ozēlōtl (Mazewalli Nation, Indígenas Sinaloense En El Norte)

Shaun Taylor-Corbett (Blackfeet)

Luísa do Amaral Souza

Thomas Studie (Cherokee Citizen)

Jose Garcia (Tarahumara (Rarmuri))

Wolfheart (NUMUNU(COMANCHE),

YOEME(YAQUI), AND LENAPE (DELAWARE))

Valentina Herrera (San Felipe Pueblo)

Rosalie Modesta Flores (Genízara)

Darlene Tapleras Franco (Wukchumni Yokuts)

Vera B. Bauer Palmer (Tuscarora-Six Nations-Grand River Band)

Stacey Parshall Jensen (MHA Nation- Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Three Affiliated

Tribes)

Paayo Povi (Hopi)

Don McIvor (Ojibway)

Ken Marez Jr. (Genízaro)

josie valadez fraire (wixarikari • mexika)

Shawna Baca (Yaqui/Apache)

Letty Martinez (Tap Pilam Coahuiltican Nation)

Lanee Bird (Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation)

Jason Grasl (Blackfeet)

Randy Reinholz (Enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of OK)

Taylor Lawrence (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

Cara Mumford (Métis Nation of Alberta (Canada))

Matt Ward (Barbareno, Ineseno)

Rachel McDaniel (Genizaro)

Princess Johnson (Member of Gwich'in Nation)

Jacque Larrainzar (Euskara)

Dr. Joseph Bruchac (Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation)

DeLanna Studi (Cherokee)

Joseph Valdez

Elise Hughes (Coastal Band Chumash)

Mariza Sullivan, Tribal Chair (Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation)

Marria Evbuoma

Nancy Morris-Judd

Cedric Fredrickson (White Earth Decendant)

Margaret M. Bruchac

Laura Gonzales

Nancy Morris-Judd

Victor Del Hierro

Lyla June Johnston (Diné)

Irene Villaseñor (Aeta, Ifugao, Purépecha)

Cuauhtemoc Peranda (Mescalero-Apache/Mexika-Chichimeca/Cano) Davina D. EstrellaRamey (Arawak/ Choctaw)

Meredith Alberta Palmer (Tuscarora, Six Nations)

Tarren Andrews

Tom Allard (Loyal Shawnee/ Cherokee)

Ingrid Dineen-Wimberly

Carla Rae (Seneca, Mohawk, French Canadian)

Tessa McLean (Pinaymootang First Nation)

Emily Taylor (Choctaw)

Mabel Negrete (CNS) (Chola-Andina-Picunche-Chilena of Wallmapu) Mimi Odell (Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation)

Lilia Raquel Rosas (Xicanindia (Chicana))

Jenny Romero

Chief Elder Ean Lee Bordeaux (West Feliciana Houma-Choctaw People)

Otakwan Acahkos Iskwiw (Métis)

Carl Moore (Hopi)

Josh Hudson (Bay Mills Indian Community (Ojibwe))

Marissa Z (genizara)

Toma Deavers (Cherokee/Oregon Water Protectors)

Kelly Lynne D'Angelo (Haudenosaunee Tuscarora)

Jesse Bowman Bruchac (Nulhegan Abenaki)

Joey Clift (Cowlitz)

Shayla Gayton (Standing Rock)

Krissi Brunoe (The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs)

Maura Sullivan (Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation)

Victoria Redstarr (Coville Confederated Joseph Band Nez Perce)

Heather Dawn Thompson (Tashunke HinZi Win) (Cheyenne River Sioux)

Marcos Aguilar (Semillas Sociedad Civil)

Lynette Sunshine Journet (Ishak/Chata)

Jason Keone Tena-Encarnacion (Kanaka Maoli)

Fabiola Ochoa Torralba (De La Tierra)

Gregorio Herrera Vigil (Pueblo Hispano Genizaro)

Danielle Ewenin (Nehiyaw, Cree-Kawacatoose First Nation-Treaty 4)

Carolyn Aflague Arroyo (Chamoru Nation)

Santiago A Jaramillo (New Mexico Genizaro)

Siena East (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma)

Lauren K. Adair (Cherokee Nation)

Dewey Bass (Nansemond Nation)

Daschzaiy Manuel (Lumbee)

Marie-Claire Erdynast (Cree Métis)

Logan Tiedt (Confederated Tribes of Siletz)

R Kent Howard (Dine`h, Ute)

Autumn Dawn Monteau, Esq. (Three Affiliated Tribes)

Weenaatainnini David Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag)

Monique Sonoquie (Tongva and Chumash)

Logan Tiedt (Confederated Tribes of Siletz)

Punkin Shananaquet (Anishinabek)

Diane Tea maker Vera (Tsilaghi)

CA Cavalier (Occaneechi Band Of Saponi Nation)

Sandy McIntosh (Muscogee Creek)

Lyz Jaakola (Anishinaabe - Fond du Lac)

Dianna Baldwin Vidales (Osage, Kaw, and Cherokee of Oklahoma)

Tami Mitchell (European/Onondowaga/African decent)

Vibrina Coronado (Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina)

Connie Battiest (Choctaw)

Brianna Sylvers (Wailacki)

Cynthia Sturkie (Creek)

Shane Ortega (Tuscarora)

Karissa Lowe (Cowlitz Indian Tribe)

Jenn Bearcat (Shoshone-Paiute, Indigenous Mutual Aid) David Dry (Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma)

Sylvia Sohokt (Cherokee)

Alejandro Quiahuitl Martinez (Coahuilteca - Yuwé Kw'Pila)

Elexa Dawson (Citizen Potawatomi Nation)

Judy Gobert (Bitterroot Salish (CSKT), Piikani)

John-Paul Chalykoff (Ojibwe, Michipicoten First Nation)

Teddy Whitefeather (Yaqui)

Chief Don Greene (Appalachian Shawnee Tribe)

Rachelle Roby (Old Cheraw of Mississippi)

Renee Hallman Marsh (Old Cheraw)

Michelle Medina Del Carriso (Carrizo Comecrudo)

Marilyn Dreamwalker Mejorado (Southern Band Tuscarora Tribe)

Susan Jeffcoat (Creek, Pee Dee)

Asani Charles (Chickasaw Nation)

Paula Freeman (Chowanoke Nation)

Karen Lynn Hendrix (Mississippi Choctaw)

Renee Hostetler (Chowanoke/ Cheraw)

Tee Oxendine (Cheraw)

Samantha Carey (Cherokee Nation)

Betsy Grace Barron (Chickasaw, Choctaw)

Anita Battiest-Perry (Choctaw)

Lucy Hammond (Lumbee)

Itti Kilimpi (Chickasaw Nation)

Alan Brott (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma)

Deloris Oxendine (Lumbee)

Cheryl Driggers (Lumbee Tribe of NC)

Katia Pacheco (Cherokee)

Twyla Chavis (Chowanoke Nation)

Dottie Jean Robbins (Tuscarora of NC)

Samantha B. (Old Cheraw descendant)

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Zaine Freeman (Chowanoke Nation)

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Juliana Laster (Weapemeoc Nation)

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Pauline Isaac (Choctaw)

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Marielle MP (Lumbee)

Chief William Hoff (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi Tribe)

Ron Black Eagle (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi)

Ramona TePaske (Yellow Buffalo Calf Woman) (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi)

Linkin TePaske (Dances on the Wind) (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi)

Deborah Smith (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi Tribe)

Joe McCulloch (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi)

Doris Jean Carpenter (Chickasaw Nation)

Gwendolyn Parker (Old Cheraw)

Daystar/Rosalie Jones (Pembina Chippewa)

J Galvloi Equa (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi Tribe)

Staff Sergeant Roger De Coster U.S. Army (Retired) (Tsalagiyi Nvdagi Tribe)

Natalya Robbins Sherman (Diné)

Emma Robbins (Diné)

Isabella Shey Robbins (Diné)

Tony Robbins (Navajo Nation, Western Navajo Nation)

Emma Robbins (Diné)

Traci Perry (Chickasaw)

Elexa "Amo" Dawson (Citizen Potawatomi Nation)

Lori Laub (Citizen Potawatomi Nation)

Gaylene Crouser (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)

Charity Campbell (Skarure Woccon)

Spirit Warrior (Skarure Woccon Tuscarora)

TaliYona Quosa Ukuwiyuh (TwoBears Ross Chief) (Ani Tsalagi Onaselagi N Eastern Band of Cherokee Lenape Indians)

Monti Mahei (Occoneechee)

Chief Marilyn Berry Morrison (Roanoke-Hatteras Indian Tribe)

B. L. Boden-Smith (Piscataway Conoy)

Kalani Queypo (Native Hawaiian)

M. Hatcher (Waccamaw)

Marcus De Leon (Lipan Apache)

Donna Adair (Cherokee Nation)

Lourdes Brayboy (Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina)

M. Chavis (Pee Dee Indian Nation of Beaver Creek)

Sarah McGee (Poarch Creek (Fvswvlke))

Genevieve Adkins (Chickahominy)

Eula Bass (Nansemond)

Tessa Jeffcoat (Pee Dee, Mvskoke)

Don Pahcheka (Comanche)

Leona Oxendine-Lossiah (Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina)

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N. Brant (Kanienkeha)

Marcella Weaver (Choctaw)

Cassidy Sturkie (Pee Dee)

Paul Sturkie (Pee Dee Indian Nation)

Mariana Lechuga (Mestiza y genízara)

DeAndre Woodson (Piscataway and Nottoway)

Bob Wolfe (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians)

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Terry Dardar (United Houma Nation)

Deb Billy (Chahta)

L. Benenhaley & family (Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians)

Chebon Long (Mvskoke)

Harley Davis (Umohon)

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Claire Lassiter (Nottoway from the Turtle Clan) Mollie Supernaw (Oh-gah-pah)

Brock Chavis (PEEDEE TRIBAL CITIZEN)

Dee George (Ye'iswa)

Linnie Bennett (Chickasaw Nation)

Gloria Billy (Peoria, Choctaw)

Jade (Kahungunu)

Connor Keeler (Ihanktonwan Dakota Oyate) Sam Hunt (Lumbee)

R. Grant (EBCI)

Jesus Delossantos (Lipan Apache descendant) Sarah Taylor (EBCI)

Darby Price (Cherokee descendant)

Tess Lynn (Loyal Shawnee and Eastern Shawnee)

D Sautepahoodle (Kiowa)

Tanya Barnoskie (UKB)

Eunice Quita Sullivan (Montaukett/Shinnecock) John Harris (Catawba)

Daniella Reyna (Chumash descendant)

June M (Pamunkey Citizen)

Kayla Shaggy (Dine, Navajo Nation)

Jeri Malone (Sang Mele Acadien Mi'kmaw)

Alex Britt (Nansemond Descendant)

Robert T King (Gros-Ventre of Fort Belknap reservation)

Brooke Allyn Wetzel (Little Shell Chippewa Descendant)

Pam Scott (Catawba descendant)

Katie Driggers (Wassamasaw)

Em Harring (Sault Ste Marie Chippewa)

Evelyn V (Jicarilla Apache)

Cecillia Coutre (Cree)

Ch'íníbaa (Diné)

Wátio Leduc (Kanien'keha: ka of Kanesatake)

Molly Marlene Miller (Mahican)

Walelu Goodman (Cherokee)

Janelle (Hualapai Tribe)

Dei Garcia (Yoeme)

Matthew (Native Village of Barrow)

Heather Davidson (Dena'ina-Native Village of Eklutna)

Sarah Singer (Diné)

Mahpiya (Spirit Lake Nation)

Molly Ouellette (Little Shell Tribe of Montana)

kelly nurataaq obrien (yupik)

Frances Danger (Mvskoke and Yat'Siminoli)

Isabel Rodriquez (Pascua-Yaqui)

Bruce D. Stonefish (Delaware Nation)

Dawn Shaggy (Navajo and Ojibwe)

Jay Keffer Metis (Nation Of Ontario)

Laura Martinez (Lipan Apache)

Halee Kirkwood (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)

Kasike Michael "Wasabakao" McPherson (Kayuana Luku Taino Nation)

Margaret Grant (Piikuni (Blackfeet))

Tonia Laird (Métis Nation of Saskatchewan)

J Stephens (Seneca-Cayuga Nation of OK)

Miranda Moran (Metis Sask)

Clay Runsmedicine Rising Sun (Northern Arapaho/Northern Cheyenne/Assiniboine Sioux)

Duane Isaac (Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation)

Alyse M (Lumbee Tribe of NC)

d ashes (dakota/ojibwe)

A. Cabrera Nuñez (Tohono O'odham)

Lara O'Donoghue (Squamish Nation)

Chasity Phillips (Siksiká and Apsáalooke descent)

Adrian Cervantes (Nahua-Mexica)

Abriana baker-silva (Southern ute)

Arnold Reed (Diné)

Bright Eyes (Taino)

Kelsey (Navajo)

E. M. Lunsford (Cherokee)

Hillary Kempenich (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Nation)

Stephanie Bless (Turtle Mountain Chippewa)

Angel Young (Standing Rock Lakota)

Lalo (Nahua-Mexica)

Therese (Cherokee)

Ryn (United Houma Nation)

Sharon Smith (Saponi/Mohawk)

Renee Roman Nose (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma)

Natalie Oxendine (Pee Dee)

Carol Oxendine-Smith (Pee Dee citizen)

M Buckner (Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians, South Carolina)

Doug Garza (Mexica descendant)

Marlene Hoover (Pee Dee descendant)

Kayleigh Smith (Muscogee Nation)

Raúl Mendez (Karankawa)

William Chavis (Lumbee and Cheraw)

MBrant (Mohawk)

Sarah Martin (Makah/Qʷidičča?a·tx̌ tribe)

Jake Jeffcoat (Pee Dee and Creek descendant)

Mike Padgett (Muscogee Nation of Florida)

Lou Supernaw (OGAHPAH)

Supporters:

Jeff Woodyard

Dave McCaul

Stepehn Wooten, PhD

Marilyn Sexton-Jones

Annabelle Chapman

Kellee Davis

Dr. Rachel Shepard

Brenna O'Brien

Fran McKay

Chadwick Johnson

Mindy Seale Fitch

Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse, PhD

Patricia Ortega Simó

Donny Garcia

Kristina Gill (University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History)

Paul Spickard (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Jon Roberts

Ngoc Phan

Jennifer Morigeau

Leona Ellefson

Christine MacInnes O'Donnell (Celtic person of the Earth First Nations Supporter Advocate)

Stephen Gardner

John Shartzer

Midge Jolly

Asha Smith

Meredith Goswami

Suzy Messerole

Tracy L. Lomax

Cheryl Tsai Perez

Jean Bruce Scott

Christina Ham

Peter Parshall Jensen

N Wallace

Theresa Johnson

Bruce Johnson

Brick Patrick

Mike Corbett

Brenda Marshall

Naama Lewis

Stephan Wolfert

Sharon P. Holland

Jessika Hepburn (Black, Jewish)

Jim Schumaker

Lynne Taylor-Corbett

Melisa S.L. Casumbal-Salazar

Luise Steuckart

Devon Murphy, MA/MSIS, living on Shawnee land

Nisa Kesseler

Melissa Martin

Crystle Lightning

Mario Barajas

Kelsey Hill

Maggie McCollester

Dr. Siobhan Senier

Aya Taguchi

Q'orianka Kilcher

Joseph Anthony Carlson (Charm City Books)

Renee Millard Chacon

Teao Sense (Audiopharmacy)

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Christina Coop

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Sarah Kirshenbaum

Mia (OIA)

Joseph Petrocelli

Fabiola Ochoa Torralba

Cora Freeman

Bryce Stokes (Organization for Indigenous Autonomy)

Samuel Ralph Allen III

Matthew Foster (New England Independence Campaign)

April M Hamm (Jim-Ree African American Museum)

Anne-Michael Smith

William A. Parks

Teejay Gascon

PJ Lafayette

Brooke Lehman (The Watershed Center) Lazlo

Thomas Bach

Nina J.

A. Lawson

Dr. Kimberly Wieser (The University of Oklahoma) Luca

Kia Hahta Nashoba (Indigenous People's United) Mackenzie Dawson

Dorea Luther

Carlyle A. Johnston

Jon Lawrence Rivera

Carlyle A. Johnston

Kayden Phoenix

Lynn Maxcy

Kathleen Anzicek DO

Susan Anzicek

Tlalcacahuatl

Jenna Blaustein

Carmela Micallef

Rosemary Wrenn

Georgia Greene

Francisco Gomez Rincon

Mark Leventer

Rian Newton

Samantha Bowling

Rian Newton

Tribal chair/Historian Marilyn Dreamwalker Mejorado Jessica Grasl

João Sequeira

John Bumpous

Jenny Lovell

Alex Gilbert

Sharon Cloud Panther Carter

Laura Bonds Sanders

Milagros Paredes

Linda Elaine Easley

Raven Naramore

Angela M. Babbit

Cheryl John

Zoey Jones

Esperanza Garcia Gailliard Anna A.

Jeremy M. Carnes

Jay	Phineas Campbell	Heather Bass
Annie M.	Laura Adams	Danielle O
Gibson Twist	Layne Clarke	Ashley Caranto Morford Sol
Maggie Burant	Elaine Nelson	

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